Remarks

Claims 1, 3 – 6, 8 – 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, and 24 are pending, with claims 1 and 9 being the independent claims. All claims stand rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the interview provided to Applicants' attorneys on July 26, 2002, during which agreement with respect to the claims was reached. Pursuant to the interview, Applicants believe that allowance of the amended claims is warranted and such action is respectfully requested. The following remarks summarize the discussions during the interview and address the Examiner's concerns with respect to the Walker reference.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 1

The interview discussion with respect to independent claim 1 focused on the Maddison and Walker references. In view of the suggested amendments to claim 1, the discussion primarily centered around the Walker reference, and whether it taught the amended steps of extracting context information from the article and querying a database containing profiles of potential reviewers to determine a qualified reviewer based on the extracted context information.

The Examiner noted that in Column 9, Lines 40 – 50 Walker discusses the Exchange finding an expert on Shakespeare to evaluate a report on Hamlet. The cited passage states:

> In yet another embodiment of the present invention, a grading application is provided. A student looking to improve the quality of his work can send an expert evaluation request to the Exchange. This request includes a copy of the work to be evaluated, such as a book report, biology paper, or set of math questions. The Exchange finds experts to evaluate the work and respond with feedback. For example, if a student is writing a report on Hamlet, the Exchange could find an expert on Shakespeare to evaluate the report. As always, the expert would be paid accordingly for his services.

Walker, Col. 9, Lines 40 – 50. The Examiner indicated that the above passage from Walker suggests that certain content information may be extracted from the attached report on Hamlet in order for the Exchange to determine that the user is requesting an expert on Shakespeare. Such a determination would be required for the Exchange to perform a database search to locate qualified experts.

However, Walker does not teach extracting context information from the article (i.e., the copy of the work to be evaluated), as claimed in claim 1. What Walker does teach is that certain criteria provided by the user in an end user request, job request, or expert evaluation request (collectively referred to hereafter as the "end user request"). It is these criteria that are then used by the Exchange to search a database to locate an expert.

For example, in Fig. 6 Walker describes how an end user request is generated. (see Walker, Column 12, Lines 3 – 4). As shown in steps 630 and 640 of Fig. 6, Walker teaches that certain criteria are combined with a request and a user ID to generate the end user request. Examples of criteria are described in step 635 of Fig. 6 and include (1) price; (2) time frame; (3) qualifications; (4) subject; (5) geographic area; etc. The corresponding description for Fig. 6 further states that these criteria are searchable and that the central controller searches the expert database for appropriate experts based on the criteria. (see Walker, Column 17, Lines 21 – 23). Thus, Walker does not teach the claimed steps of extracting context information from the article and querying a database containing profiles of potential reviewers to determine a qualified reviewer based on the extracted context information. Walker teaches receiving criteria in an end user request and searching a database based on those criteria.

Furthermore, in Fig. 7 Walker describes the initial processing of an end user request. (see Walker, Column 12, Lines 5 – 6). As shown in step 760, if the user will not purchase an old request or if a similar request does not exist in the database, then the criteria of the end user request are used as parameters for a search of the expert database. Then, in step 770, a list of experts is generated whose qualifications meet the criteria from the end user request. Thus, Walker teaches that the database is searched by criteria provided by the user in the end user request. Walker, however, does not teach the claimed steps of extracting context information from the article and querying a database containing profiles of potential reviewers to determine a qualified reviewer based on the extracted context information.

Because Walker does not teach the claimed steps of extracting context information from the article and querying a database containing profiles of potential reviewers to determine a qualified reviewer based on the extracted context information, Applicants respectfully assert that independent claim 1 is in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly requested. Because dependent claims 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 depend from claim 1, it is axiomatic that they too are not obvious in view of the prior art. Therefore, a notice of allowance for these claims is also respectfully requested.
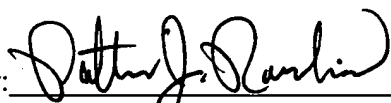
Claim 9

The arguments with respect to independent claim 1 equally apply to independent claim 9 in view of the amendments made to claim 9 to include the steps of extracting context information from the article and querying a database containing profiles of potential reviewers to determine a qualified reviewer based on the extracted context information. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that claim 9 is in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly requested. Similarly, because dependent claims 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, and 24 depend from independent claim 9, it is axiomatic that they too are not obvious in view of the prior art. Thus, Applicant's respectfully request a notice of allowance for these dependent claims.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all of the claims of the application in view of the above amendments and remarks. If the Examiner has any questions or comments regarding this amendment, the Examiner is respectfully urged to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch LLP

Dated: September 20, 2002   By:

Pattric J. Rawlins
Reg. No. 47,887

Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch LLP
530 B Street, Suite 2100
San Diego, California 92101-4469
(619) 238-1900

Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

The claims have been amended as follows:

1.   (Twice Amended) A computer implemented method for peer review over a communications network, comprising:

receiving an article from an author via a communications network;

extracting context information from the article;

querying a database containing profiles of potential reviewers to determine a qualified reviewer based on the extracted context information;

assigning [a] the qualified reviewer to the article;

providing an evaluation form to the reviewer;

receiving a completed evaluation form from the reviewer;

providing the completed evaluation form to the author;

receiving a response from the author directly in the completed evaluation form;

providing the completed evaluation form with author responses to an editor;

receiving a publication decision from the editor; and

providing the publication decision to the author and the reviewer.

9.   (Twice Amended) A computer implemented method for peer review over a communications network, comprising:

receiving an article from an author via a communications network;

extracting context information from the article;

querying [searching] a database containing profiles of potential reviewers to determine a plurality of qualified reviewers based on the extracted context information;

ranking the plurality [generating a ranked list] of qualified reviewers;

contacting each qualified reviewer and requesting that the qualified reviewer agree to review the article;

receiving an agreement from one or more qualified reviewers;

providing the article to an accepting qualified reviewer;

providing an evaluation form to the accepting qualified reviewer;

receiving a completed evaluation form from the accepting qualified reviewer;

providing the author with the completed evaluation form;

receiving a response from the author directly in the completed evaluation form;

providing the completed evaluation form with author responses to an editor;

receiving a publication decision from the editor; and

providing the publication decision to the author and the reviewer.